

## Keep a tight focus and magnify your sales success

by **Connie Brubaker**

Some of the best advice that I've ever received was to surround myself with successful people with a positive attitude. Doing so can really help you see that top producers aren't so different from you after all. They don't have some sort of sales super power. They're not members of some other species. They don't have some sort of super-secret formula to turn prospects into gold.



### Connie's Comments

What you'll likely discover instead is a lot of common interests, skills, concerns and values. You'll see their success is usually the result of hard work, discipline and sound sales habits — habits you too can use.

Five years ago I was new to the world of sales myself, so I asked some seasoned,

successful sales veterans to share a cup of coffee and a big serving of advice. I wanted to avoid pitfalls and

accelerate my success in the training industry, and I wanted to learn from folks who actually had been in the trenches. They were gracious and helpful, readily sharing with me some invaluable tips and pointers.

Of all the things I learned that day, one idea really stood out: all highly successful salespeople learn to focus on only two or three specific markets. These "focus markets"

are ones in which the salespeople:

1. Already have experience or expertise.
2. Have strong contacts, which translate into quality referrals.
3. Relate to because of personal values, aptitudes or other reasons.
4. See large potential for the services or products they provide.
5. Have analyzed the markets and feel they are in the midst of dramatic change, fierce competition, or other challenges they need help in facing.

Focus markets are people and organizations that speak your language, have your values, and know people you know. You're comfortable working with them, and passionate about their success.

Sometimes it takes a couple of years to define and begin to develop a focus market. Once you select a particular market, begin studying periodically  
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## Practice the art of "possibility thinking"

Dr. Robert Schuller used the phrase "possibility thinking" to describe a process of consciously focusing on positive outcomes instead of dwelling on the negative.

It's not wishful thinking — it takes work to turn best-case scenarios into achievable ones. Here's some tips for putting possibility thinking to work in your company:

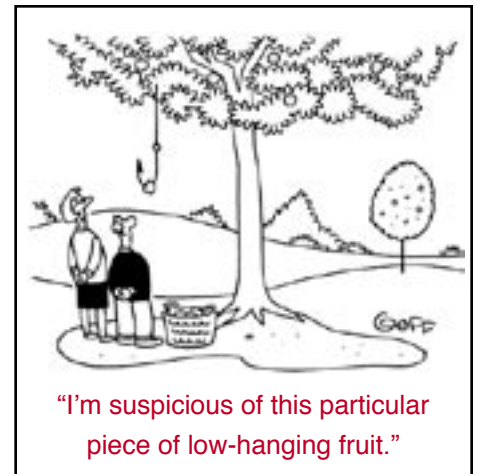
- When faced with a challenge, ask "What's the best possible outcome?"
- Imagine how you would feel if that outcome happened.
- Evaluate the likelihood of that out-

come happening.

• Finally, ask yourself what actions you can take to ensure that outcome happens.

By consciously focusing your goal-seeking mechanism on a specific target, you subconsciously program yourself for success — at any level. All your behaviors, habits and actions will fall in line with the achievement of those goals.

Try possibility thinking for yourself. Write down a decision or problem you're facing and walk it through the four steps: outcome, feeling, chances and action.



"I'm suspicious of this particular piece of low-hanging fruit."

In this issue of SOLUTIONS:  
 • Magnify sales with focus markets  
 • Why customers leave  
 • The power of possibility thinking

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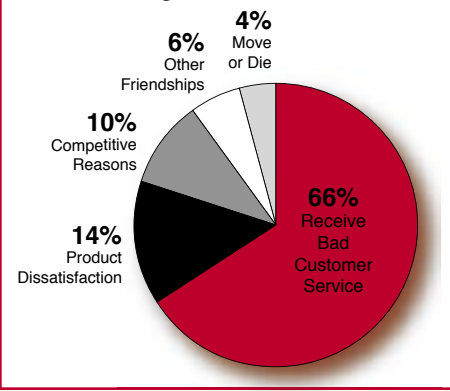
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## Why customers leave: bad service ranks #1

A *U.S. News and World Report* study shows that two-thirds of customers who stop doing business with a company do so because of poor customer service.

In fact, customer service has become a key differentiator for successful companies — companies that stress customer loyalty and referrals.

“Assume everyone in your company could communicate more clearly — and invest in learning how,” says marketing guru Harry Beckwith. “In great client relationships, the client knows you will act predictably, act and speak with integrity, and do nothing to harm her — ever.”



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

**“In the long run, you hit only what you aim at; therefore AIM HIGH.”**

— Henry David Thoreau

## Focus on less to achieve more sales

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odicals and industry publications to continually educate yourself about your focus market’s current issues and trends. Attend association meetings or trade shows to further your exposure and gain a more complete understanding of the challenges facing that market. Study membership directories for the names of major players (and prospective customers).

Your goal should be to become an expert in your focus market. The more you understand a business or industry, after all, the more qualified you’ll be to help your clients and customers. You’ll be able to honestly tell prospects, “I know your business, I understand your challenges, and I can help you become more profitable.”

Through it all, keep this fact in mind: you can’t be all things to all people. If you try, you’ll simply end up overworked, exhausted and unhappy. The key to sales success is focus. Remember using a magnifying glass as a kid to focus sunlight into a heat ray? Same principle — except instead of burning ants, you’ll be torching sales records.

**NEED A SPEAKER?** *Connie Brubaker is a certified Integrity Systems® business consultant and professional speaker who focuses on sales, customer service and leadership. Her speeches include Leadership Matters: Motivating Your Employees to Success; The Emotional Side of Selling: Discovering What’s Holding You Back; The Magnolia: a Southern Woman Shares Her Struggles and Triumphs; and Turn Storytelling into Storyselling: Using Stories to Make a Connection.*